

March 11, 2011

TO: Teresa Parsons, SPHR  
Director's Review Program Supervisor

FROM: Kris Brophy, SPHR  
Director's Review Investigator

SUBJECT: Paula Amell v. Seattle Central Community College  
Allocation Review Request ALLO-10-041

### **Director's Determination**

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to March 22, 2010, the date Seattle Central Community College Human Resources received the request for a position review. As the Director's Review Investigator, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits, and the verbal comments provided by both parties during the review telephone conference. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Amell's assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude her position is properly allocated to the Program Coordinator classification.

### **Background**

By letter dated March 15, 2010, Catherine Marzyck, Assistant Dean/Institute of English, requested a position review of Ms. Amell's position, asking that her position be reallocated to a Program Specialist 2 classification. Ms. Amell completed a Position Questionnaire (PQ), and signed the form on March 16, 2010. Ms. Marzyck completed the supervisor's portion and signed the form on May 16, 2010. On March 22, 2010, Seattle Central Community College's human resource office received Ms. Amell's completed Position Questionnaire (PQ) form.

Seattle Central Community College notified Ms. Amell on July 21, 2010 that her position was properly allocated as a Program Coordinator (Exhibit B-1). (Note: This date was verified by Ms. Ledbetter during the telephone review conference).

By fax on August 19, 2010, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Finnestad's request for a Director's review of Seattle Central Community College's allocation determination (Exhibit A-1).

On January 19, 2011, I conducted a Director's review telephone conference. Present during the call were Paula Amell; Robin Ledbetter, Council Representative, WFSE; Catherine Marzyck, Assistant Dean/Seattle Central Institute of English; and Kathryn Woodley, Human Resources.

### **Rationale for Director's Determination**

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Ms. Amell provides administrative clerical support to the Seattle Central Institute of English (SCIE). SCIE provides English language study for academically bound and general ESL international students who are in the country on F-1 Student or other visas. Ms. Amell assists the Assistant Dean with the day-to-day coordination of office processes and procedures.

Ms. Amell's duties and responsibilities are summarized from the PQ (Exhibit B-3) as follows:

- 50% Program Administration - In charge of program procedures administration & moving "paperwork" needed to run the program: Inform faculty/staff of how to, when to, collect materials, follow up, coordinate scheduling procedures to coincide with program needs, signage and announcements. Create/oversee tutoring schedules.
- 20% Tracking & Reporting - Maintain reporting and tracking archives, public folders. Create program reports.
- 15% Weekly Program E-Newsletter - Create/write/distribute 4-8 page weekly newsletter PDF format 2 sections: 1 faculty and 1 students to apprise of process, deadlines, upcoming calendar, activities, reminders, needed information.
- 15% Program Support - Resolve computer, printer, copier issues for department, keycard/room/lab requests, course construction, contact lists, budget reconciliation (leave reports), supply inventory & ordering, building work orders.

Ms. Catherine Marzyck, Assistant Dean SCIE, submitted this position review request in cooperation with Ms. Amell and fully supports reallocation of the position to a higher level class. She states in her comments to the appeal (Exhibit A-3) that the current job description is a third-generation description based on additional and more complex duties assigned to the position following Ms. Amell's hire in April 2009. She stated that since 2009, Ms. Amell has been assigned additional higher level duties including independently

coordinating and overseeing returning student registration and the SCIE/College Bridge tutoring process.

#### Summary of Ms. Amell's Perspective

Ms. Amell asserts her position exceeds the Program Coordinator level of responsibility. Ms. Amell contends her position is highly autonomous with professional level responsibilities for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Institute of English program under the supervision of her supervisor; that she represents the program and regularly confers with organizations outside of the division at the level of an administrator and not a receptionist, and that she has developed presentations for faculty orientation, registration, and graduation. Ms. Amell asserts she participates with faculty and staff in establishing program standards and identifying areas for program development for the non-academic portion of the Institute of English. Ms. Amell asserts she is a full participant in assessing program needs and identifying areas of improvement, and in developing approaches and processes for meeting those needs, as well as testing and implementing processes with an eye for further improvement. She asserts that no Program Specialist 2 would be responsible for establishing the academic standards for a program. Ms. Amell asserts there are two other positions within the college which perform similar duties that are classified at the Program Specialist 2 level.

#### Summary of Seattle Central Community College's Reasoning

Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) asserts Ms. Amell's position does not perform the essential functions of the Program Specialist 2 class. SCCC asserts she does not have responsibility for overseeing the day to day operation of the program, nor is she the program representative. The College asserts Ms. Amell's position does not have budgetary authority, and does not confer with agencies and organizations outside of the college. The College asserts Ms. Amell does not develop or make presentations to the public, and she does not have responsibility for establishing program standards, nor does she identify areas for program development. The College asserts that while a few of her duties could be described in the Administrative Assistant class, the majority of her tasks are specifically designed for work with programs internal to the Institute of English which is the program specialty for the position. The College asserts Ms. Amell's duties are clearly defined by the Program Coordinator class.

#### Comparison of Duties to Class Specifications

In Byrnes v. Dept's of Personnel and Corrections, PRB No. R-ALLO-06-005 (2006), the Board held that "[w]hile a comparison of one position to another similar position may be useful in gaining a better understanding of the duties performed by and the level of responsibility assigned to an incumbent, allocation of a position must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing classifications. The allocation or misallocation of a similar position is not a determining factor in the appropriate allocation of a position." Citing to Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and Industries, PAB No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996).

When comparing the assignment of work and level of responsibility to the available class specifications, the class series concept (if one exists) followed by definition and distinguishing characteristics are primary considerations. While examples of typical work identified in a class specification do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification.

When determining the appropriate classification for a specific position, the duties and responsibilities of that position must be considered in their entirety and the position must be allocated to the classification that provides the best fit overall for the majority of the position's duties and responsibilities. Dudley v. Dept. of Labor and Industries, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-007 (2007).

#### Comparison of Duties to the Administrative Assistant 2 class.

The Definition of the Administrative Assistant 2 classification states:

Provide administrative and staff support services for a section or unit with delegated authority to act in supervisor's absence in areas of substance.

The Distinguishing Characteristics for this class states:

These positions may be distinguished from lower level classes by addition of the delegation of authority to act for or in the regular place of the superior in substantive areas, and/or supervision of some professional or several clerical subordinates and a formal reporting alignment identifying the position as the principal administrative assistant to the superior who is at the first professional supervisory level or above.

Ms. Amell's position does not encompass the overall scope and focus of responsibility stated in the Definition and Distinguishing Characteristics for this class. While Ms. Amell's position includes performing various administrative tasks associated with the program's daily operations, her position does not have delegated authority to act on her supervisor's behalf in substantive areas as envisioned by this class. She does not supervise others and does not have a formal reporting alignment identifying her position as the principal administrative assistant to her supervisor. For these reasons her position should not be allocated to the Administrative Assistant 2 class.

#### Comparison of Duties to the Program Series

The Department of Personnel Glossary of classification terms defines a program as:

A specialized area with specific complex components and tasks that distinguish it from other programs (or the main body of an organization). A program is specific to a particular subject and has a specific mission, goals, and objectives. A program typically has an identifiable funding source and separate budget code.

The specific components and specialized tasks involve interpretation of policies, procedures and regulations, budget coordination/administration, and independent

functioning. Typically requires public contact relating specifically to program subject matter, clients, and participants.

Duties are not of a general support nature transferable from one program to another. Performance of clerical duties is in support of an incumbent's performance of specialized tasks. Independent performance of these duties usually requires at least a six-month training period.

The Seattle Central Community College Institute of English meets the definition of a program. The SCIE program's policies, procedures and activities related to international student education services are distinct and do not transfer readily to regular SCCC processes for course scheduling, registration, tutoring, graduation and reporting.

#### Comparison of Duties to Program Specialist 2

The Class Series Concept for the Program Specialist 2 states:

Positions in this series coordinate discrete, specialized programs consisting of specific components and tasks that are unique to a particular subject and are separate and distinguished from the main body of an organization. Positions coordinate program services and resources; act as a program liaison and provide consultation to program participants and outside entities regarding functions of the program; interpret, review and apply program specific policies, procedures and regulations; assess program needs; and develop courses of action to carry out program activities. Program coordination also requires performance of tasks and application of knowledge unique to the program and not transferable or applicable to other areas of the organization.

Examples of program areas may include, but are not limited to: business enterprises, fund raising, volunteer services, community resources, election administration and certification, juvenile delinquency prevention, recreational education and safety, energy education, aeronautic operations and safety, student housing, financial aid, and registration.

The Definition for Program Specialist 2 states:

Positions at this level work under general supervision and plan, organize, direct and coordinate operations for programs such as the business enterprise, volunteer services and community resources, elections examination/administration programs. Incumbents oversee day-to-day program operations, function as the program representative and resource, have extensive contact with program participants and outside entities, and resolve problems within a delegated area of authority. Unusual problems, probable outcomes and solutions are presented to higher levels for resolution. Incumbents may be delegated limited authority to approve budget expenditures and may assist higher-level staff with developing and coordinating statewide program activities.

Positions at this level have independent responsibility for planning, organizing, directing and coordinating all program operations. Incumbents coordinate services and resources, assess program needs, and develop courses of action to carry out program functions and activities.

Ms. Amell's position does not fully meet this level of responsibility.

Since coming to her position, Ms. Amell has worked to analyze, improve and provide training on administrative clerical processes and procedures for the department involving course scheduling, course registration, student tutoring, volunteer scheduling, use of computers and equipment, course grading and evaluation processes, statistical reporting, and book management. Ms. Amell conferred regularly and was an active participant in working with faculty and staff to update and revise the department's administrative procedures. This culminated in creating a new administrative process and procedure manual for the department.

While Ms. Amell has responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day administrative clerical functions of the SCIE program, she does not plan, organize, and direct the operations for the program as a whole. She does provide specialized administrative clerical support to projects and activities related to new faculty orientation, testing, curriculum, assessment and scheduling such as editing and formatting the Faculty Manual; creating power point presentations and quick reference materials for new faculty; and writing a weekly newsletter for faculty and students. She also schedules and coordinates schedules for student tutoring with the Tutoring Center. However, the primary focus of her position is to coordinate the program's administrative clerical processes to ensure proper completion of required paperwork and coordinating clerical procedures for faculty and staff related to the program's educational activities.

Positions at this level act as the program's primary representative and resource. They serve as a liaison and provide consultation to program participants and outside entities regarding the functions and content of the program. Incumbents contact program participants and outside entities extensively and resolve problems.

Ms. Amell's position does not fully reach this level of responsibility. Ms. Amell does not serve as the primary representative and resource for the program as a whole. Her contact with external program participants is limited. The clients for the program are international students. External contacts and consultation with international students regarding program content and functions are handled by the Executive Dean of International Programs and the International Marketing department.

Ms. Amell does act as the liaison for SCIE within the District and with outside program vendors to interpret policies and procedures and provide information regarding the department's administrative processes and procedures. This includes consulting with and advising SCIE faculty, students, International Program staff, the SCC tutoring center, testing center, IT department facilities, registration, cashier, business office, maintenance, security, course scheduling, V.P. of Student Life, Student Leadership, Student Activities, book publishing companies, and equipment vendors and service personnel.

Ms. Amell's principal responsibility is to provide specialized administrative clerical support to the SCIE program. Ms. Marzyck relies on Ms. Amell to act as the department's resource for coordinating the daily process flow of clerical work needed for faculty and department staff to carry out SCIE activities. Ms. Marzyck stated during the review telephone conference that she relies on Ms. Amell to perform her duties independently. In total, her overall scope and level of responsibility for directing the activities of the SCIE program do not reach the Program Specialist 2 level responsibility for planning, organizing, directing and coordinating all program operations.

For these reasons her position should not be allocated to that class.

#### Comparison of Duties to Program Coordinator

The Class Series Concept for the Program class series states:

Perform work requiring knowledge and experience that is specific to a program. Organize and perform work related to program operations independent of the daily administrative office needs of the supervisor. Represent the program to clients, participants and/or members of the public. A program is a specialized area with specific complex components and discrete tasks which distinguish it from the main body of an organization. A program is specific to a particular subject. The specialized tasks involve interpretation of policies, procedures and regulations, budget coordination/administration, independent functioning and typically, public contact. Duties are not of a general support nature transferable from one program to another. Performance of clerical duties is in support of incumbent's performance of specialized tasks.

The Definition for the Program Coordinator classification states: "[c]oordinate the operation of a specialized or technical program."

The Distinguishing Characteristics for the Program Coordinator classification state:

Under general direction, perform work using knowledge and experience specific to the program. Exercise independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules and regulations. Independently advise students, staff, program participants and/or the public regarding program content, policies, procedures and activities; select/ recommend alternative courses of action and either:

(1) Project, monitor, maintain, initiate and/or approve expenditures on program budgets

OR

(2) Have extensive involvement with students, staff, the public and/or agencies in carrying out program activities, and coordinate, schedule and monitor program activities to determine consistency with program goals.

On a best fit basis, Ms. Amell's position more closely matches the Class Series Concept, Definition, and Distinguishing Characteristics of the Program Coordinator classification.

Ms. Amell works under general direction and relieves her supervisor of the day-to-day administrative clerical procedures and processes of the SCIE. She uses her specialized knowledge to independently carry out administrative support activities for the program. She exercises independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules, policies and procedures related to coordinating administrative processes and procedures for the program. She has contact with on-campus students and staff in carrying out program activities.

Ms. Amell performs a variety of tasks in support of the program including providing information to faculty, staff, and students regarding program administrative procedures and processes; she composes printed materials including a newsletter related to program activities; she gathers, compiles, analyzes and prepares narrative and/or statistical reports regarding program operations; and she monitors and prepares information in relation to established program goals.

Ms. Amell's overall level of responsibility and decision making authority, as well as her responsibility for coordinating administrative processes and reporting functions for the SCIE program fit within the Program Coordinator classification.

In this case, the majority of the duties assigned to Ms. Amell's position and her level of responsibility and delegated authority are best described by the Program Coordinator classification. Ms. Amell's position should remain allocated to the Program Coordinator Class.

### **Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The mailing address for the Personnel Resources Board (PRB) is P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911. The PRB Office is located at 600 South Franklin, Olympia, Washington. The main telephone number is (360) 664-0388, and the fax number is (360) 753-0139.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c: Paula Amell  
Robin Ledbetter, WFSE  
Kathryn Woodley, Seattle Central Community College  
Lisa Skriletz, DOP  
Enclosure: List of Exhibits



**Paula Amell v. Seattle Central Community College**  
**ALLO-10-041**

A. Paula Amell Exhibits

1. Director's Review Request form, received by fax on August 19, 2010.
2. Additional information submitted by Paula Amell entitled, "Class Specification Review for Paula Amell" (12 pages).
3. Statement by Catherine Marzyck, Assistant Dean: "Background on the Seattle Central Institute of English (SCIE) Program Coordinator position".
4. Statement by Paula Amell: "Employee Statement contesting Reallocation Denial".
5. Additional Samples of Work provided by Paula Amell:
  - A. Institute of English Procedures Manual
  - B. Institute of English Statistical Data Collection, Analysis and Reporting
  - C. Mid-Term Evaluations
  - D. Institute of English Registration Process
  - E. Institute of English Book Order Process
  - F. Faculty & Program Reference Materials

B. Seattle Central Community College Exhibits

1. Allocation determination letter from Kathryn Woodley to Mr. Gary Oertli, (Interim President) dated July 15, 2010. (Note - Letter was delivered July 21, 2010).
2. Allocation determination rationale from Kathryn Woodley.
3. Paula Amell's Position Questionnaire for Classified Positions (Part I, II, III), dated March 22, 2010.
4. Job Description Content Summary for Program Coordinator position (Paula Amell) dated April 23, 2009.
5. Letter to Kathryn Woodley from Catherine Marzyck Re: Request to Re-Classify Ms. Paula Amell from Program Coordinator to Program Specialist 2

C. Class Specifications

1. DOP Class Specification for Program Coordinator (107N).
2. DOP Class Specification for Administrative Assistant 2 (105F).
3. DOP Class Specification for Program Specialist 2 (107L).